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TAGS: [MOPS](#) [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [PREL](#) [SU](#) [CH](#)
SUBJECT: CHAD REBELS URGE GREATER US AND FRENCH ENGAGEMENT
TOWARDS POLITICAL SOLUTION

REF: A. A) KHARTOUM 1209
[1](#)B. B) KHARTOUM 1146
[1](#)C. C) NDJAMENA 457
[1](#)D. D) NDJAMENA 479
[1](#)E. E) NDJAMENA 446
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Classified By: CDA Robert E. Whitehead, for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (C) On October 28, CDA Whitehead met with Chadian rebel Alliance Union des Forces de la Resistance (UFR) President Timane Erdimi to deliver talking points provided by AF/C. Erdimi was accompanied by UFR First Vice President Adouma Hassaballah Djararab and Secretary General Abakar Tollimi.

[1](#)2. (C) Erdimi affirmed that his troops had settled in North Darfur, characterizing their location (Northwest of Kutum) as "a good spot" where they have no contact with civilians. (Note: Erdimi himself and the UFR leadership remain in Khartoum. End Note) Erdimi asserted that the area was calm, characterizing the Chad-Sudan border region as much more volatile with the presence of numerous armed groups. He steadfastly denied that the rebels served as a proxy for the Sudanese military, emphasizing that UFR would not aid the Sudanese armed forces within Sudan's borders.

[1](#)3. (C) The reaction to CDA Whitehead's delivery of talking points provided by AF/C ranged from indifference to hostility; Erdimi took particular umbrage at the mention of possible punitive measures if rebel forces misbehaved. He dismissed the return of former regime opponents Ahmat Soubiane and Goukouni Oueddi to Chad as inconsequential, noting their returns had done nothing to lessen Deby's grip on power or offer any real reform. "The system (under Deby) never changes," added Tollimi (Note: Erdimi, Tollimi and Hassaballah showed no reaction to the US. offer to act as an observer to ensure a safe arrival in N'djamena should they return to Chad. Given the comment made by a senior Chadian official reftel C, we wonder if a return could even be brokered. End Note.)

[1](#)4. (C) Both Erdimi and Tollimi expressed pessimism on the prospects of the EU-led initiative to begin dialogue with the GOC. They have received no indications from the international community or the GOC that President Deby is willing to engage in a dialogue, they said. "We are ready for negotiations, it is he who is refusing," Tollimi emphasized. Should President Deby agree to the demands codified in UFR's road map they are eager to integrate themselves into the political process in accordance with the August 13 political accord, he said.

¶5. (C) Erdimi continued to air a familiar list of grievances against President Deby and his "spoiled child", the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM). He accused JEM of violating refugee conventions by recruiting in refugee camps in Chad. He further indicated that he believed Khalil Ibrahim's influence on President Deby had grown over the past several years as a result of his strong tribal and community ties in Eastern Chad. "Is Deby supporting Khalil, or is Khalil supporting Deby?" he asked rhetorically. To help solve the conflicts on both Darfur and Chad, Tollimi urged that the US. engage with France in a coordinated, regional approach towards finding a political solution for both conflicts. .

¶6. (C) Comment: The Chadian rebels appear sincere about wanting negotiations (on their own terms), although it is unclear to us on the basis of reftel C if the Government of Chad is interested in their eventual, peaceful return. We detected a whiff of desperation over the nascent rapprochement between Sudan and Chad, which could deprive the UFR of a Sudanese platform in which to train and from which to strike into Chad. The rebels' realization that time is not on their side could ostensibly expedite a negotiated political solution.

WHITEHEAD